

° A D V I C E

TO A

YOUNG DIVINE

CONCERNING

PREACHING.

D U B L I N :

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A D W O D

Y O D W O D

C O S E T I N G

P R E A C H I N G

D U B L I N

T H E M E T H O D I S T S

AND

W O R S H I P

OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

ADVICE, &c.

YOU desire, that some Directions may be given you, both for the composing and Delivery of your Sermons.

1. He, who sets himself to any Work, ought well to consider for what End and Purpose it is or ought to be designed: That his Labour may not be in vain.

2. The End and Design, which every Preacher of the Gospel ought always to propose to himself, cannot be better expressed than in our blessed Saviour's own Words. *Go ye therefore and teach all Nations—teaching them to observe all Things whatever I have commanded you, Mat. 28. 19, 20.* To which I desire you to add, *Tit. 2. 11, &c.* And to take Notice of the concluding Words, *v. 15. These Things speak and exhort*

hort, &c. I might add many more pregnant Passages of *Holy Scripture* to the same Purpose : But they cannot escape your own Observation, in your constant and serious Reading both of the *Old* and *New Testament*. The Business, the only Business of a Preacher ought to be, to influence his Audien~~ce~~ to Holiness, in order to their eternal Happiness. Let this then be your first and principal Rule in the making of every Sermon, that it be proper for this End.

3. It is a good Custom, That a Preacher always chooses a Passage of *Holy Scripture*, which is called his *Text*, for the Ground or Foundation of his Sermon. Let it be always your Care to make Choice of such a *Text*, as may easily and naturally lead you into such a Discourse, as may answer the End above-mentioned.

4. Let not the Introduction to your Sermon be very long. It may be proper to give some brief Account of the Context, thereby to shew the Occasion of the Words ; Or to set forth the present State or practices of Men ; that it may appear how seasonable it may be to handle the following Subject, and sometimes it may be best to enter

ter upon the Text without any Preface. Long Introductions are generally tedious to the Audience.

5. Plain Texts (of which there is great plenty) are generally the best. But if there be any Obscurity in the words, Let it briefly be explained ; that the Text may be well understood.

6. For the drawing of useful Matter from the Text, one Way is to deduce one or more Doctrinal Propositions from it : Each of which Propositions may (if there be occasion) be a little explained, to guard against mistakes ; and then proved from *Scripture* or *Reason* or both.

7. Sometimes it may be proper from it to raise material Questions ; the answer to each of which must consist of one or more distinct Propositions ; Each Proposition to be a little explained (as occasion shall be) and then proved from *Scripture* or *Reason* or both.

8. Or sometimes it may be proper to divide the Text into its Parts ; and from each part (almost as if it were a distinct Text) to raise and establish Doctrinal Propositions,
to

to be explained and proved, as is before mentioned ; but in a shorter Way.

9. From each Doctrine, thus explained and proved, proper Inferences are to be drawn, either for the confirming of some point of Faith, or the enforcing of some Rule of Practice. Which Inferences may also be farther explained and proved, as there shall be occasion.

10. Sometimes it may be best immediately to subjoin each Inference to its respective Doctrine, from whence it is deduced ; or sometimes to reserve them all for the Conclusion of your Discourse.

11. The best Conclusion of a Sermon is to leave a strong Impression of some particular Christian Duty upon the Minds of your hearers : To which it may sometimes be very useful to subjoin two or three Prudential Rules for the better putting it in practice.

12. I have given you my clearest thoughts of the way of composing a Sermon : But be not strict in adhering to this or that particular Method. Always choose a proper subject ; and whatever Method occurs

occurs to your thoughts, pursue it ; Provided it be clear. Method is certainly of great use both to the Preacher and Hearers : But I have heard and read good Sermons that have not been strictly Methodical.

13. Before you sit down to write your Sermon, draw up a short Scheme of all the Heads of it in their proper order. This will not take up much Time, and will make the Composition very much the easier.

14. The best Sermon will lose much of its force, if it be not well delivered. Let your Delivery be very Distinct, that not one word may be lost. Some things require a quicker pronounciation than others ; But nothing should be spoken languidly or Negligently from the Pulpit. I can give you no better Rule than this : Speak as one who is in earnest, and desires that all he says may be both understood and believed. But take care to avoid everything (in your Expressions, Pronunciation, and Gesture) that any way looks like Affectation, or Singularity.

15. To make you a useful Preacher, take care to store up good Notions in your Mind.

Mind, by studying the *Holy Scriptures* and Books of Morality and Practical Divinity. *These things Command and teach.*—Give Attendance to Reading.—Neglect not the Gift that is in thee.—Meditate upon these Things; give thyself wholly to them.—Take heed to thyself, and to thy Doctrine; Continue in them: For in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee, 1. Tim. 4, 11. &c.

This that follows is a simple rule but has its convenience. I have the preceding night as a cat when shaving in the morning will interrupt you and delay you.

F I N I S.

Write the day of the month the year
 & the day or holiday
 in a small piece of paper at
 home. mark when it shall be
 to be said. and always write
 the preparatory prayer and
 the Lord's prayer in the lesson